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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L WARSAW 001009

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV GG RU PL

SUBJECT: POLAND REJECTS RUSSIAN RECOGNITION OF SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA AS INDEPENDENT STATES

REF: SECSTATE 91894

Classified By: Political Counselor F. Daniel Sainz. Reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) MFA Director for Eastern Policy Jaroslaw Bratkiewicz told us that the Polish Foreign Minister's public statement of August 27 makes clear the GoP's rejection of Russian recognition of Georgia's breakaway regions. Bratkiewicz noted in particular that Russian actions are in violation of the sixth point in the cease-fire agreement negotiated by the Presidents of France and Russia, which called for international discussions of the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. PolCouns expressed U.S. appreciation for Poland's leadership during the Georgia crisis, and informed Bratkiewicz that the USG would be encouraging similar opposition to the Russian recognition worldwide, based on reftel points.

¶2. (C) Bratkiewicz said the President and Prime Minister are still wrestling with the question of who will represent Poland at the September 1 European Council summit on Georgia. The two will meet August 29, and both may attend the summit. It is too early to predict the results of the EU summit, Bratkiewicz said, but he welcomed the visible hardening of German Prime Minister Merkel's position toward Russia. However, he said there remains a gap between Merkel and Foreign Minister Steinmeier, who tends to be more conciliatory toward Russia.

¶3. (C) Bratkiewicz said the Russians are stuck in an anachronistic policy of maintaining its "sphere of influence" in the near abroad. He said Russian practitioners of realpolitik appear to see brutal force as an occasionally useful instrument, and view agreements like the Medvedev-Sarkozy cease-fire as "mere pieces of paper." Bratkiewicz said Russian UN PermRep Vitaliy Churkin betrayed a certain arrogance in his televised appearance dismissing the possibility that a UN Security Council emergency session on Georgia could have any effect on events. However, he suggested that despite Medvedev's comments about Russia not fearing a Cold War, the Russians would want continued contacts with the West, even if relations become chilled.

QUANRUD